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Book Notices.

The Fourth Gospel.

The Gospel of St. John, Vol. I. Chs. 1-11. [The Expositor's Bible.] By Marcus Dods, D. D. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1891. Pp. xiii., 388. Price, \$1.50.

The two volumes already contributed by Dr. Dods to this valuable expository series have been so warmly welcomed and praised that a similar reception will naturally be accorded his latest book. It is not, however, the equal of either the volume on First Corinthians or that on Genesis. Oddly enough, the question of the authorship of the Gospel is not taken up at all, and the supposition all the way through is, that it is literally and unqualifiedly the work of the Apostle. That was the easiest way to treat the problem, and perhaps it seemed to Dr. Dods that Prof. Sanday's present prolonged discussion would in due time leave the question settled in favor of the Johannean authorship. One feels inclined to put an interrogation point after the introductory statement that "in the whole range of literature there is no composition which is a more perfect work of art * * there is no paragraph, sentence or expression which is out of its place, or with which we could dispense. * * The sequence may at times be obscure, but sequence there always is." Later, in speaking of the cleansing of the temple, which in this Gospel is placed at the outset of the ministry, Dr. Dods says: "[even so early in his public career Jesus] had made up his mind that he would meet with opposition at every point, and that while a faithful few would stand by him, the leaders of the people would certainly resist and destroy him." This of course satisfies the Johannean account, but how about the Synoptic representation upon that point? And with equal confidence and decisiveness many other of the controverted topics are treated, a phenomenon a little astonishing. But while the volume fails of satisfying the critical reader it is nevertheless a valuable contribution to the literature on this Gospel. The treatment is topical, not exhaustive, yet the main themes of the Gospel are discussed, and with a vigor, freshness, insight and scholarliness that attract and instruct the reader. The chapter upon the miracle at Cana, for instance, is particularly good. The didactic element is large, in accordance with the style of the series, and one finds Dr. Dods to be a keen, spiritual and persuasive preacher.

The Acts of the Apostles.

The Acts of the Apostles. Vol. I. Chas. 1-9. [The Expositor's Bible.] By G. T. Stokes, D. D. New York: A. C. Armstrong and Son, 1891. Pp. xxiii., 424. Price, \$1.50.

For the next two years, and through the agency of the International Sunday School Lessons, the attention and study of Christendom will be centred upon the Acts of the Apostles, and certainly no New Testament writing calls for or deserves more devoted investigation and consideration. The volumes upon the Acts in the Expositor's Bible series will be ready in time for this study. They have been given into the loving, able and trustworthy hands of Dr. Stokes,

who has already published volume one, covering the Jerusalem period of the Christian Church, chaps. 1-8 (the outside of the book wrongly bears the figures I-IX, though but a single disconnected verse from that last chapter is included). One of the important features of the book is the special pains at which the author has been to gather and incorporate all light and material afforded by ancient documents, some of which he discusses at length. His opening chapter on the Origin and Authenticity of the Acts is characteristic of his general spirit, conception and style, and is a very good piece of work. A great many themes which ought to be discussed in a treatment of the primitive church history were necessarily left untouched, by reason of the plan of the series and the small capacity of the volume—such omissions must have been a greater grief to Dr. Stokes than to any of his readers. But the vital ones have been taken up, and discussed in a strong, bright, thoughtful, scholarly way. One can be charitable toward the digressions which discuss the present Church of England, for the author forewarns that he writes as a “decided Churchman.” The general homiletic material, a prominent element in all the volumes of this series, is well presented, choice and useful. Particularly good are the discussions of the community of goods, and the diaconate, with the practical lessons they teach for to-day. Considering the work as a whole, there will be few books, apart from the commentaries proper, which will be more inspiring and helpful to the Sunday School worker in this study of the Acts.

Concise Dictionary of Religious Knowledge and Gazetteer. Edited by Rev. S. M. Jackson, M. A. Associate editors, T. W. Chambers, D. D., F. H. Foster, Ph. D. Second and Revised Edition. New York: Christian Literature Co., 1891. Pp. 986.

This is a valuable work, well conceived and well executed. It will prove of the highest service to all Sunday School workers, Bible students, and general readers, who cannot afford, or have not the courage, to purchase and use the unabridged Bible Dictionary and the regular encyclopedia. In this single volume is comprised all the information which such will desire on biblical, ecclesiastical, historical and archæological topics. The treatment is concise, and yet for the most part it is satisfactory, because what one wants one finds. For instance, two classes of information which one is always wishing and which it is almost impossible to obtain: the biographies of eminent biblical scholars of our own day, and a concise, complete and accurate presentation of the present ecclesiastical denominations. In both of these departments this Dictionary meets the want admirably. The preparation of the work has been in the hands of scholarly, conservative, able men. The articles are all signed. The contributors of the leading articles are men whose names insure the worth of the material, among them being: Prof. Francis Brown, Dr. H. M. Dexter, Dr. W. E. Griffis, Prof. A. V. G. Allen, Dr. Selah Merrill, Pres. C. D. Hartmanft. The Gazetteer, which is a new feature of this edition, is a religious atlas, covering the whole time of the Jewish and Christian Church; the maps are new, expressly prepared for this work, true to the latest topographical knowledge, and equipped with tables for the most convenient use. The typography is all that could be desired, and the patent marginal index makes reference easy. The publishers express the belief that they have issued the best single volume work of reference extant in the field of religious knowledge. We feel no disposition to question the truth of their claim.